

# Project Summary

## Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in China

### The Challenge

China has made enormous achievements in poverty reduction since the beginning of economic reforms in 1978. The number of poor people living on less than 1US\$ PPP per day fell from 490 million to 88 million between 1990 and 2002. While this success has also lift millions of ethnic minorities out of poverty, but in comparison with other more advanced groups and areas, the ethnic minorities are lagging behind. On one hand, the minorities live in remote and mountainous areas where living conditions are harsh surrounded by forests, grasslands, desert, arid lands, or areas of high humidity. On the other hand, minority peoples possess a rich and distinctive way of life and language set against a unique social, cultural and historical backdrop.

China's 55 ethnic minorities have a combined population of 106 million, or 8.4% of the national total. But at the end of 2003, 13 million of them still lived in conditions of extreme poverty, accounting for about 46% of the national total of extreme poor. Of the Government's 592 national designated poverty counties, 267 are located in ethnic minority areas. GDP per capita in ethnic minority areas was 56.71% of the national average in 2003, and 39.39% that of eastern regions. Women belonging to ethnic minority groups are often disadvantaged both as members of a minority group and as women. This severely curtails their social and economic opportunities and leads to multifaceted social exclusion. Women from ethnic minority groups are especially vulnerable to poverty and social deprivation, and there are indications that they may be even worse off in terms of their economic opportunities and labor market position.

In the whole country, 22 'small' ethnic minority groups whose population is below 100,000, with a combined total of 630,000, are particularly vulnerable to the loss of cultural and natural resources. Income and non-income related indicators show that poverty in these groups is deeply entrenched and needs more focused support.

### The Response

Working in line with national poverty reduction initiatives in ethnic minority areas and international assistance, the project is aimed to support government efforts to alleviate poverty among ethnic minorities and to increase equity contributing to the construction of harmonious society in China. It seeks to improve human development outcomes among targeted ethnic groups through strengthening institutional support mechanisms and linkages to facilitate and encourage needs-based response at community level. The project will do so through the promotion of cultural



diversity, gender equality and respect of ethnic minorities economic and social rights. The project will apply a comprehensive approach that will: i) help to develop and strengthen leadership for managing and coordinating needs-based poverty reduction from provincial/regional to county level ii) support working capacities, from county to community levels, for targeted poverty alleviation interventions iii) develop the necessary supportive institutional structures for the managed growth of tourism and cultural industries for poverty reduction based on cultural and natural assets. Institutional support and capacity development will be reinforced by demonstrations of interventions at community level in selected ethnic minority areas. There are three inter-linked sub-programmes to support each of the above objectives

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### At A Glance

Start Date: 2006  
End Date: 2010

Implementing Partner(s): China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchange (CICETE)  
State Ethnic Affairs Commission  
Project ID: 00052371

*UNDAF:* Outcome 1 Socio-economic policies are developed and improved to be more scientifically-based and human centred for sustainable and equitable growth

Outcome 3. More efficient management of natural resources and development of environmentally friendly behaviour in order to ensure environmental sustainability

MDG Goal: Goal 1 Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger  
Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women  
Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

CPAP output:  
Output 1.3 Improved tax legislation and strengthened capacities in tax administration enable the development of pro-poor initiatives  
Output 1.4 Poverty reduction approach piloted on target population  
Website: [www.undp.org.cn](http://www.undp.org.cn)

Total Budget: US\$ 7,000,000  
UNDP Budget: US\$ 2,000,000  
Government Co-financing: US\$ 5,000,000

Project location(s): Yunnan, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia

To contribute to this initiative, or to find out more about the programme, please visit our website or contact Ms. Pei Hongye, Programme Manager at (86-10) 8532 0753 or hongye.pei@undp.org